

AN
HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE

NEW NORTH CHURCH,

OCTOBER 1, 1854.

BY

ARTHUR B. FULLER.

Published by Request.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,
111 WASHINGTON STREET.

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C A M B R I D G E:
METCALF AND COMPANY, PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

DISCOURSE.

LET THEM SHOW THE FORMER THINGS, WHAT THEY BE, THAT WE MAY
CONSIDER THEM.—Isa. xli. 22.

A CONTEMPLATION of the past, if it lead to emulation of its good deeds and avoidance of its errors, if it stimulate men to do nobly by showing what already hath been thus done, is often a wise employment of the passing hour. And if it testify the undying nature of virtue by showing that each true action lives ever in its effects, such meditation may nerve our hearts to exertion by the sweet hope that the good we do need not in its influence slumber in our graves, but shall live on when the poor body in which the active spirit once dwelt has crumbled to the dust.

In entering once more our house of worship, which has now been for three months closed in order to be remodelled as to its interior, it seems fitting to vary from the routine of discourse and speak of somewhat which shall prompt us to renewed and increased effort that this church of the fathers shall long remain a monument of the zeal and piety of the past, and a witness to the faith and self-sacrifice of the present. And when I remember that this very year in which the present improvements have been made completes the *half-century* since the dedication of this edifice, I seem to hear a voice, speaking in the words of our text, and saying of all who meet here this day, “Let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them.” Our history as a religious society is, for

this country, no modern one. Just one hundred and forty years have passed since this society was gathered and a church erected on this spot. To us, under God, is committed the carrying forward the affairs and promoting the spiritual interests of one of the most ancient societies in our land. Let us, then, endeavor this morning to "show the former things, what they be," and may their consideration stir us to further exertion to carry on the good work the founders of this church so well begun. The limits of my discourse will compel brevity, nor does a single hour suffice for more than the bare enumeration of events which have occupied so many years in transpiring. In the year 1712, "seventeen substantial mechanics,"* members of the Old North, or Second Church, united themselves together to build an additional church in this part of the city, then the most flourishing and considered the most desirable for residences in Boston. They petitioned the Old North for leave to proceed in the matter, which being duly granted, they went forward to the work with much prayer and earnest faith united with zeal and energetic action. A wooden building was erected on the present site, the land having been purchased of Colonel Thomas Hutchinson. This edifice was solemnly dedicated to God on the 5th of May, 1714. It was comparatively a small building, constructed on a very different plan from our present church, having the pulpit in the centre. The plan of this house is still in existence, and shows the very great difference between the architectural taste of that day and our own. The society which styled itself "The New North Church," in distinction from the "Old North," after some delay, proceeded to the choice of a pastor, and elected to that office Mr. John Webb, then chaplain at Castle William, now Fort Independence. He was ordained on the 20th of October, 1714, and on the evening of

* See Appendix, Note A.

the same day the church covenant was assented to in public, it having been privately signed by most of the members on the day when the church was dedicated.*

The early ministry of Mr. Webb was eminently peaceful and prosperous, and so would it, probably, long have continued, had it not been determined to settle a colleague pastor, according to the custom of that period. The church-members, though claiming the exclusive right to choose a pastor, as was then the practice, yet decided to allow the congregation, consisting both of church-members and worshippers not connected with the church, to confirm or reject their choice. The church, by a decided majority, chose Rev. Peter Thacher, then a settled pastor at Weymouth. At the ensuing meeting of the congregation, some thirty-nine members of the congregation and six church-members protested against this choice, and withdrew from the meeting.† Forty-six votes were given for Mr. Thacher, who was then declared elected. This is scarcely the time to revive an ancient controversy; suffice it to say, that while the New North Church doubtless made a mistake in persisting in settling Mr. Thacher with only a majority of one in his favor, and had better have exhibited a more conciliatory spirit, yet the brethren styling themselves aggrieved, while probably conscientious in their original opposition, yet by their persistency and grossly indecorous conduct at the installation of Mr. Thacher, exhibited a temper and spirit hardly reconcilable with the Gospel standard. They ultimately withdrew and established the "New Brick Church," and in process of time were as a society united with the Old North, and the societies thus united are now called the "Second Church." The controversy, we may trust, is at rest for ever, while the kindest feelings have succeeded the ancient bitterness. Mr. Thacher was installed on the 27th of January, 1720, and, after

* Note B.

† Note C.

an active and devoted ministry, died February 26th, 1738. He was considered quite metaphysical in his preaching, but was a man of great learning and most devout and fervent in spirit. So successful was his ministry, that during its continuance, in 1730, the ancient church edifice was enlarged to double its original proportions.

It was decided to settle another colleague pastor, and after calling one or more clergymen to the post who declined the invitation, Mr. Andrew Eliot was selected, and his ordination took place April 14th, 1742. Mr. Eliot preached his own ordination sermon, as had Mr. Webb before him, and as was the custom of that period. Eight years after, Rev. John Webb, the first pastor of the church, departed this life to enter upon his reward. I find him characterized as a man of much learning and truly eloquent in his enforcement of Gospel truth. "His voice," says Rev. John Eliot, in a discourse delivered at the dedication of this house, "was sonorous and musical; his manner pathetic, with great piety and seriousness, zeal and animation." "He was," says Rev. Dr. Freeman, "a lover of good men. Nor was his love confined to any denomination; wherever he saw the Divine image, it gained his affection and esteem; yet he was steady to his principles, and would never give up any truth, either out of fear or complaisance. It is with pleasure I add, that he grew in candor and charity for those who differed from him, the nearer he approached to that world where perfect love reigns."

Up to this time it was not customary to read from the Sacred Scriptures during public service, but in 1750 Mr. Nathaniel Holmes presented a copy of the Bible to the society, which copy has been in use for public worship from that time till about one year ago; so that for more than one hundred years the same book had been used by our fathers and by us, till its pages had become dim and worn with age. For more than another century may it be pre-

served by this society as a precious and sacred memorial. In 1772 another innovation was made, by discontinuing the alternate reading and singing of the hymns line by line. This change at first gave great offence, and was regarded as a new measure which would prove very detrimental to true religion; but Religion endures many changes of her vesture, provided her essential nature remain undisturbed. Not till November, 1823, was an organ used by this society; an innovation which likewise was at first regarded with a degree of sadness by many conscientious persons.* It is instructive to find that no progressive step has ever been taken by this society, and the same is probably true of the world at large, without being at the time opposed as a dangerous innovation, and mistrusted as of perilous tendency. This fact should make us tolerant of some degree of change, and ready to listen candidly to propositions for the advancement of what we all have at heart, adopting as our motto, "Prove all things, holding fast all and only that which we are sure is good."

But troublous times were approaching both for the country and the Boston churches. Dr. Eliot sympathized heartily in the popular indignation at British oppression, and even in 1763 wrote to a friend in Great Britain in the following prophetic strain: "If the measures of your government are not changed, depend upon it the Colonies will be precipitated into a contest for which they are badly prepared, but which will terminate in their independence upon the mother country. This event must take place, in the course of nature, before a great many years are past." In 1775 the New North Church contained regularly the largest congregation then assembled in this town, and the society was at the height of its prosperity under the efficient and devoted labors of its pastor. But in that year Boston was besieged, and of her churches some were demolished, others

* Note D.

desecrated, all weakened. During this trying period Dr. Eliot remained in the town by compulsion of the British; his church was regularly opened for public worship, and its pastor was of great comfort to such of the people of the town as then remained and sympathized with their country in its effort for freedom. He suffered much, however, from depression of spirits, separated from his family, and most of his parish being absent likewise. He never entirely recovered from this period of harassment and anxiety, and died on the 13th of September, 1778, not being spared to witness the glorious realization of his early prophecy as to our national independence. From the testimony of his contemporaries, and from well-authenticated tradition, we judge Dr. Eliot to have been a man of no common power. Bold and earnest in manner, stern yet truthful in his rebukes, clear and forcible in his discourses, devoted as a pastor, he secured respect and inspired almost awe in those with whom he came in contact. During his ministry he was chosen President of Harvard University, an office which he declined, but would have filled with dignity and honor. Liberal in his feelings, and ministerial intercourse, he was yet firm in his adherence to what he believed the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel. His most prominent characteristic, perhaps, was an ardent love of liberty, desiring it not for himself alone, as, alas! too many do, but for all men likewise, without distinction of national origin. "He was," says his son, in some historical notices of this society, "always a zealous opposer of African slavery. Many people in Boston had slaves for their family servants. Soon after his marriage, a sum of money was subscribed by his friends sufficient to buy a black boy for him; but he declined the present, unless he might be permitted to put him as an apprentice to some business when he should be of a suitable age, and at the termination of his apprenticeship he should be a freeman." Thus early do we have tokens of the religious conscience testifying against slavery, then

dominant even in New England; thus early did the ministry of this ancient church protest against the sinful institution of slavery.

In looking about for a successor to the venerable Eliot, none seemed to the society, upon the whole, so worthy or so well adapted to their wants as his son, John Eliot, a man of a less stern demeanor than his father, with the same firm attachment to principle. He was accordingly chosen to that position hallowed by all the religious associations of his childhood, and ordained as pastor of this church November 3, 1779. Under his prosperous ministry the society soon felt strong enough to build anew, and, instead of the repairs which were at first contemplated, this spacious edifice arose, a monument both of the taste and zeal of the fathers. Its corner-stone was laid September 23, 1802, and this church dedicated May 2, 1804, just a half-century ago the present year. Long may it stand, in attestation of the piety and self-sacrifice of those who erected it and left it as a precious heritage to their children! Let me rejoice with you to-day, that in the recent alterations none of its essential features have been changed, while the conveniences of the present time have been judiciously added to the substantial workmanship of a past era.*

One year before the dedication of the church the society was incorporated by a special act of the legislature as "The New North Religious Society in the Town of Boston" a name which it has since legally borne, though still usually termed the "New North Church." Nine years after the dedication this society was heavily bereaved by the death of Dr. Eliot, and sincerely mourned his loss. He died February 14th, 1813. It was the Sabbath day: meet that upon such his gentle spirit should enter upon its rest! It was communion day with the church: fitting was it

* Note E.

that at such an hour he who so often had communed in a loving spirit with the Church on earth should join the communion of the “general assembly and Church of the first-born in heaven.”* When asked by the venerable Dr. Lathrop of the Second Church, “My friend, are you prepared for the worst?” he answered, “I know where I have placed my hopes, and there I am contented to rest.” Dr. Eliot, as well as his father, was a friend of sound learning in our time-honored University at Cambridge. A member of its Corporation, he unweariedly sought its welfare.

We come now to times more within the remembrance of many present, nor need I be so particular in speaking of events with which you are more familiar than I, or of my predecessors in the ministry, who were better known by you than by me.

Mr. Francis Parkman was chosen the successor of Dr. Eliot in the pastoral office, and ordained December 8th, 1813. The sermon at the ordination was preached by Rev. Dr. Channing, the charge was by Rev. Dr. Lathrop of the Second Church, the right-hand of fellowship by Rev. Dr. Tuckerman of Chelsea, the ordaining prayer by Rev. President Kirkland; names eminent and honored in all our churches, and hallowed in the memory of all who love truth and goodness. After a ministry of nearly thirty years Rev. Dr. Parkman requested his people to choose a colleague, and Mr. Amos Smith was elected to that office, and ordained December 7th, 1842. The society were not privileged to retain his services for many years, as in June, 1846, he resigned his office, and was subsequently installed as pastor of the Unitarian church in Leominster, over which he still has charge. Two years afterward Dr. Parkman also resigned his pastorate, and on January 28th, 1849, preached a farewell discourse in this house, in which he reviewed the incidents of his ministry. The discourse

* Note F.

was printed, and is in the possession of many of you. Rev. Dr. Parkman died November 12th, 1852. He was an earnest friend of Harvard University, and his genial hospitality will long cause him to be remembered by a large circle of friends.

Dr. Parkman was succeeded by Mr. Joshua Young, who was ordained pastor of this church February 1st, 1849. His ministry in this city was not of long continuance, as in July, 1852, he resigned his pastoral charge, and was subsequently settled over the Unitarian society in Burlington, Vermont.

And now, my friends, we come to a period certainly of deep interest to myself, the commencement of my own ministry among you, which has continued only since June 1st, 1853.* The history of that ministry is yet to be written, and must be written by another hand than mine. God grant that it may be fruitful of good to you as a society, and may be instrumental in advancing not alone your temporal, but, what is of far higher value, your spiritual welfare! What can I say, other than that your unanimity and earnestness of request, yea, even the very depression and urgent need of your condition, were my chief inducements to come to you; that our intercourse has been, thus far, uninterrupted in its harmony; and that, while willing to spend and be spent in your service, yet upon your co-operation and sympathy, your faith and works, your zeal and fidelity, your prayers and devotion, do I, under God, rely chiefly for any measure of success which may be mine?

A few miscellaneous topics relating to our history require now to be mentioned, and then my present discourse will be ended.

The Lord's Supper was administered to the New North Church for the first time November 28th, 1714, and for one hundred and forty years this society has cherished

* Note G.

the solemn rite which our Saviour left as a memorial of his love for man, whether in life or in the hour when he bowed his head and said, "It is finished." On the 22d of June, 1854, some alterations were made in the form of our church organization, specifying the objects of the church relation more definitely than heretofore, and providing, as we trust, for more efficient action.* We still retain, however, the former church covenant, long in use by us as a society, while allowing those who prefer it to be admitted by a somewhat simpler form. After all, no organization will avail us anything, except we seek spiritual life and grace from the great Head of the Church, and have more and more of our Divine Master's self-consecrating spirit. May God grant the influences of his Holy Spirit, reviving his work among us, and infusing and quickening in us a stronger and more devoted zeal for the attainment and promotion of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Since the establishment of the church there have been admitted to its membership one thousand four hundred and sixty-nine persons. Ah! could that goodly company meet here this day, the house would be filled with members of this church of Christ; but most of these and of their pastors have passed on to commune with their Redeemer in heaven.

For about one hundred years in the history of this society, the rite of baptism was uniformly administered *in the church*, and no persons, whether children or adults, were baptized at home except in case of dangerous illness. So important was this point regarded, that it is recorded that in 1770 a Mr. Cheever, having been duly proposed for church-membership, and being so ill as to make it improbable he would recover, desired to be baptized at his own residence. The subject was laid before the church and permission was granted, but the ruling elders and

* Note II.

deacons were appointed to accompany Dr. Eliot in order to sanction the ceremony by their presence. It has not seemed to the pastors of this church in latter years that the place sanctifies the rite, but the rite consecrates either our private dwellings or that great temple of Nature in which certainly many baptisms were performed in the times of Jesus and the Apostles. Yet probably most pastors have a preference for baptisms in church as a general rule. Since this church was founded, seven thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight are recorded as having received baptism at the hands of its pastors.*

The early ministers of this society were accustomed regularly to catechize the children once or twice a year, and for a long time this was the only separate public religious instruction they received. The New North Sunday School was a branch of the Hancock Sunday School. It was formed, though with considerable opposition, in May, 1829. Rev. F. T. Gray was its first Superintendent.† Its first meetings were held in the vestry situated in the tower of this church; a most inconvenient place, and so long disused that its very existence is almost forgotten. The present vestry was subsequently made, in 1834, and in that a Sabbath School has been assembled, though with frequent interruptions, until the present day. It is now comparatively flourishing, needing only a deep interest on the part of the society generally, and more teachers added to our present devoted band, to make it as large and as prosperous as any in this portion of our city. On closing the school in July, as we were compelled to do, that alterations might be made in the vestry as well as church, the school numbered about one hundred and twenty pupils, a larger number than it has ever contained before. Let it be regarded as one of the chief instruments of our spiritual and temporal prosperity, and deserving the

* Note I.

† Note J.

interest, activity, and prayers of us all, and its future is full of hopefulness. The New North Sunday-School Association was formed May 11th, 1854.* Its objects are to awaken and sustain among the teachers and in the society a general interest in Sabbath-school instruction. It is composed not only of teachers, but all worshippers in this church are invited to become members. It is hoped, also, that it will be an efficient auxiliary to the general "Sunday-School Society" connected with our denomination.

More than one hundred and forty years ago I find a record is made of frequent conference and prayer meetings, held at the house of Matthew Butler, in which the early founders of this society strengthened themselves for the arduous work which they had undertaken. For many years, through a mistaken fear of religious fanaticism, which is the last danger to which, as a religious communion, we are exposed, these meetings were abandoned. Some years since, however, an effort was made to reinstate them among the means for spiritual improvement which we as a society would employ. A meeting of this character is now regularly held in our vestry on the evening of each Thursday. I believe such meetings have been productive of much good, and would here warmly commend them, as an instrumentality which you cannot too faithfully use or too carefully cherish. Let us return to the *ancient* usage of this society, and, as did its founders, meet often together for prayer and religious converse, and may God grant that attendance upon these meetings may soon become as general as attendance upon the sanctuary, and that they may be well sustained by those who are ready to testify to God's goodness, and seek to win souls to Christ; that there may be many ready to address God in prayer and to sing his praise. So shall He "revive his work" among us.

* Note K.

Another instrumentality of good among us, and of recent formation, is the Eliot Benevolent Association.* This is composed of both gentlemen and ladies, who endeavor to promote the objects for which it was formed, which, as specified in its constitution, are the relief of the destitute, the support of religious institutions, and mutual acquaintance and friendship among its members. The Association was organized October 18th, 1853, and during its short history has been found pleasant and useful. It takes the place of any sewing-circle, being founded on a somewhat broader basis and to promote a wider class of interests.

As early as the year 1807, we find it recorded that "a letter was read from Messrs. John W. Quincy, Thomas Dean, and Samuel Beals, in behalf of twenty-four young gentlemen of the society, requesting the approbation and support of the (Standing) Committee towards establishing a Library for the benefit of the society." At the annual meeting this request was acted upon by declining to give the aid as a society, though speaking favorably of the project. I find no account or tradition of such a library, nor is it probable that any other than that belonging to the Sabbath School has existed till recently. About a year since, a Parish Library was formed, through aid derived from the Eliot Benevolent Association, and regularly, at the close of the afternoon Sabbath service, is opened for the free delivery of its books to all members of this parish. The Library is worthy of more extensive encouragement and support, and the volumes it contains much better deserve perusal than most of the lighter literature of the day.

And now, my friends, we meet together again in this house we love. We owe and would pay a tribute of gratitude to the Committee by whom these alterations have been so judiciously made, and to those whose gen-

* Note L.

erous exertions and contributions * have enabled us to complete them without incurring additional indebtedness. We owe thanks, likewise, to those religious societies† in this city who kindly proffered to us a home in their several sanctuaries while we were deprived, for the time, of our own. But more than all we owe devout thanksgiving unto God, who has spared our lives during the past season when the pestilence has walked abroad at noonday, and so many have gone down to their last earthly resting-places. It is a noticeable fact, that while Death has removed some of our kindred, not one of the usual worshippers in this house, whether young or old, has deceased during the three months in which our church has been closed. We enter again this loved sanctuary; there are sacred memories in our minds at this hour, as we recall the history of this venerable society. There is devout gratitude when we think of the providence which has watched over our fathers, and still watches over us. There is hope for the future when we rely upon the united and faithful labors of us all, with Heaven's blessing never withheld from those who diligently seek it. Yes, I dare use that word *hope*, though not without hesitation. For a series of years the native population has been gradually receding from some parts of the city, and this church, as well as others, has, from that and other causes, lost a large number of once active and devoted members. Nor should I dare to speak of hope, did I not feel a strong confidence that you will labor earnestly to maintain religious institutions in this house, both for yourselves and your children, and that you will strive that this society shall not be numbered with the things which have perished without much faithful endeavor on your part to keep alive the fire of incense upon this ancient altar. This cannot be done without your fidelity and zeal; without your readiness to make much sacrifice both

* Note M.

† Note N.

of ease and of that money which is so often, alas! preferred to religion. Above all, let us trust in God. Let us not put our trust and dependence upon mere beauty of architecture or earthly appliances, but on His grace and the reception to our hearts of the Gospel of His Son,—on the influences of that Holy Spirit freely imparted to those who ask it; and let our prayer to-day be in those words of sacred writ which formed the text for the discourse, when, a half-century ago, this church was dedicated : “ The Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers ; let him never leave or forsake us.”

* Note O.

A P P E N D I X.

NOTE A.—Page 4.

THOSE who first associated themselves for the purpose of establishing the New North Church were Solomon Townsend, Erasmus Stevens, Moses Pierce, Caleb Lyman, John Pecker, Alexander Sears, Ebenezer Clough, John Goldthwait, Samuel Gardner, William Parkman, John Barrett, Isaac Pierce, Joshua Cheever, Matthew Butler, Elias Townsend, John Goff, James Barnard.

NOTE B.—Page 5.

This Church Covenant was as follows:—

“ We, whose names are subscribed, apprehending ourselves called of God into the church state of the Gospel, do, first of all, confess ourselves unworthy to be so highly favored of the Lord, and admire that free and rich grace of his, which triumphs over so great unworthiness ; and then, with a humble reliance upon the aids of grace therein promised to them that, in a sense of their own inability to do any good thing, do humbly wait upon him for all, we do thankfully lay hold on his covenant, and would do the things that please him.

“ We declare our serious belief of the Christian religion, contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and as exhibited in the confession of faith received in our church ; heartily resolving to conform our lives to the rule of that holy religion, so long as we live in this world.

“ We give ourselves to the Lord Jehovah, who is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost ; and avouch him to be our God, our Father, our Saviour and Leader, and receive him as our portion.

“ We give up ourselves unto the blessed Jesus, who is the Lord Jehovah, and adhere to him as the head of his people in the cove-

nant of God, and rely upon him as our Prophet, our Priest, and our King, to bring us into eternal blessedness.

“ We acknowledge our everlasting and indispensable obligations to glorify God in all the duties of a godly, sober, righteous life ; and very particularly in the duties of a church state, and a body of people associated for an obedience to him, and enjoyment of him, in all the ordinances of the Gospel. And we therefore depend upon his gracious assistance for the faithful discharge of the duties thus incumbent upon us.

“ We desire and intend, and with dependence upon promised and powerful grace, we engage to walk together as a church of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the faith and order of the Gospel, so far as we shall have the same revealed unto us, and will conscientiously attend the worship of God, the sacraments of the New Testament, and the discipline of his kingdom and all his holy instructions, in communion with one another ; — and that we will lovingly watch over one another, carefully avoid stumbling-blocks and contentions, as becomes a people whom the Lord has bound up together in the bundle of life.

“ At the same time, we also present our offspring with us unto the Lord, purposing with his help to do our part in the methods of a religious education, that they may be the Lord’s.

“ And all this we do, flying to the blood of the everlasting covenants for the pardon of our many errors, and praying that the glorious Lord, who is the great Shepherd, would prepare and strengthen us for every good work, to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

Signed by John Webb, Pastor, Alexander Sears, Caleb Lyman, Ebenezer Clough, William Parkman, Elias Townsend, Benjamin Gerrish, Samuel Gardner, Matthew Butler, Moses Pierce, John Barrett, Nathaniel Kenmry, Lately Gee, Solomon Townsend, Erasmus Stevens, Joshua Cheever.

NOTE C. — Page 5.

The principal objection urged against Mr. Thacher was, that, being already settled over the church in Weymouth, it was “ *contrary to congregational usage and principle* ” to invite him to

settle in another place. Whether this was so, we will not pretend to decide, but certain it is this "usage and principle" had been previously deviated from in more than one instance. In Rev. Henry Ware's History of the Gathering of the Second Church, page 5, he says: "Mr. Norton, minister of Ipswich, and Mr. Davenport, of New Haven, both of them among the distinguished men of that period, and *sundry others who were officers in other churches but likely to remove from where they were, were invited unsuccessfully to take charge of this infant church.*" Both Norton and Davenport were afterwards, and while retaining their respective places, invited to the First Church, and both accepted the invitation and continued in Boston till death closed their labors. "Four years after," says Mr. Ware, "Mr. John Mayo, who on account of 'some difficulties and discouragements' had left his church in Nosset, Plymouth County, was called to the pastoral office here, and accepted." From this it is evident that the action of the New North Church was not unusual. It is probable, however, that there were other circumstances, personal, local, or otherwise, of which we have no account, that had their effect in producing the great excitement. Mr. Thacher was a native of Boston, a man of superior talents, and an eloquent and popular preacher. He had been settled in Weymouth several years, and his people there were strongly attached to him. He had also many friends in Boston who were anxious to have him located among them, and was himself, doubtless, desirous of a change. It was under these circumstances that the New North Church, by a vote of thirty-six out of forty-six, invited him to become their pastor, as colleague of Mr. Webb. The majority in his favor, when the congregation and church voted together, was indeed small; but it will be remembered that the churches of that day claimed the exclusive right to choose the pastor; a right only waived at this time through courtesy. The character of Mr. Webb certainly renders it improbable that there could have been any very wide departure from the path of right or established usage. It was said of him by one who had the best opportunity of knowing, that "He was a steady friend to the order, the liberties, and the principles of these churches, and openly bore his testimony against every deviation from them. His courage at such times was remarkable. But when he apprehended it to be the cause of God, he set his face like a flint, and was clad

with zeal as a cloak, fearing the face of no man.” Yet Mr. Webb warmly approved and encouraged the choice of Mr. Thacher, and his subsequent installation.

NOTE D.—Page 7.

Early in the history of this society, its musical affairs were directed by a committee styled the “Superintendents of Singers.” They appear to have attended very faithfully to the somewhat difficult duties assigned them. In later times, this labor has been no less efficiently performed by the Standing Committee.

The following record of votes is found in relation to procuring an organ:—

June, 1823. A proposal to place the organ belonging to the Second Church in our gallery, while said church was being repaired. —Rejected.

1823, July 22d. First talk of an organ in Standing Committee.

Aug. 3d. Society voted that it was expedient to procure an organ, and appointed a committee to ascertain expense and devise means of paying for it.

Aug. 17th. Committee reported that one could be obtained for \$1,800, another for \$2,500, and recommended contribution and subscription. Voted to have an organ, and a committee chosen to carry the vote into effect.

Aug. 31st. Above vote reconsidered, for the purpose of having the question taken by ballot.

Sept. 7th. Ballot taken. Yeas 42, nays 11.

Sept. 14th. Contributions for organ, \$1,254.95.

Oct. 5th. Amount collected for organ, \$1,431.95. The committee were ordered to procure the smallest organ, for \$1,700.

The day it was first used is not stated.

Oct. 13th, 1823. In Singing Committee, a committee was appointed to procure an organist.

1824, Jan. 5th. The committee on organist reported that they had engaged Mr. Asa Fillebrown as organist for one year from the 20th of November last, at \$150 per year, and a lad to blow the organ, for 25 cents per Sunday.

1826. Voted to exchange organ for a larger. Additional subscriptions, \$603.

NOTE E.—Page 9.

The committee to remodel the house as to its interior were Messrs. Albert Betteley, William P. Howard, and Benjamin Fessenden.

NOTE F.—Page 10.

I find ample evidence of the true Christian charity of Dr. Eliot, and the liberality of his general tone of thought: a liberality, however, far removed from indifference to religious truth, or the prevalence of erroneous opinion, or any willingness to resign faith in Jesus Christ and the inspired truth he hath revealed.

In the right-hand of fellowship which he received at his ordination from the Rev. Mr. Howard, of the West Church, occur these just words, which doubtless met a response in the heart of him to whom they were uttered. Would that they directed the ecclesiastical conduct of every minister of the meek and lowly Jesus!

“Claiming for ourselves the right of private judgment, and calling no man master on earth, we are sensible you have the same rights, and therefore assume no authority over your faith. Nor do we make your subscribing to our creed, or any creed of human composition, a condition of our communion and friendship. This would be going back to Egypt, laying a foundation for the same tyranny and persecution from which our ancestors fled, and establishing Popery under a new form.

“Far from us be the arrogance and impiety of thus implicitly claiming infallibility, and pretending to be wiser than God. And far be it from you, my brother, ever to submit to so unreasonable a claim, should it be required of you as a term of communion.

“So long, sir, as you appear to make the Scriptures the rule of your faith and practice, and preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and, as his ambassador, beseech men to be reconciled unto God, we will embrace, assist, and support you as a brother.”

That these sentiments found full acceptance with Dr. Eliot, all who know of his ministry are aware, and the following sentence in his sermon delivered at the dedication of this church likewise evidences:—“The good and honest heart discovers itself in individuals of every sect. And a lesson of this sort we may learn, that

too much stress should not be laid upon modes and forms, nor upon any subjects of speculation. Am I too liberal in saying, that the wise and unwise are to be found among every denomination of Christians, and that all sincere inquirers after truth are true Christians, of every sentiment and persuasion? To believe this will not injure the cause of virtue, or kindle a blush on the cheek of that charity which hopeth all things, which endureth all things.”

NOTE G.—Page 11.

The order of services at the Installation was as follows:—

Introductory Prayer by Rev. Amos Smith, of Leominster; Reading of the Scriptures, Rev. T. S. King, of Boston; Sermon, Rev. Andrew P. Peabody, of Portsmouth, N. H.; Prayer of Installation, Rev. S. K. Lothrop, D. D., of Boston; Charge, Rev. Samuel Barrett, D. D., of Boston; Right-Hand of Fellowship, Rev. J. I. T. Coolidge, of Boston; Address to the Society, Rev. F. D. Huntington, of Boston; Concluding Prayer, Rev. Robert Hassall, of Mendon.

NOTE H.—Page 12.

Form of Organization, adopted unanimously by the Church, June 22, 1854.

Art. 1. The church connected with the New North Religious Society shall assume no sectarian name, desiring simply to be known as a branch of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Art. 2. The objects of this church shall be the improvement of our own moral and spiritual condition, mutual advice, sympathy, and assistance in all needed ways, the promotion of benevolent causes, and, in general, the advancement of the spiritual kingdom of Christ in our own hearts, in our families, in our religious society, in our community, and throughout the world.

Art. 3. Any person wishing to lead the Christian life and to promote the above-named objects of our organization may be admitted by a vote of the members of the church present at any meeting, and shall be received to the church by baptism, when that rite has not been previously performed, and by assenting to the church covenant annexed; or, in place of the latter, by simply

assenting before the church to this form: "You receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master, and the New Testament as the rule of your faith and practice, and you will endeavor to perform all known duties." Persons may be admitted from other churches by a vote of the church, and without any other public form.

Art. 4. A business committee of five brethren shall be annually elected in October, who shall take charge of any business the church may refer to them, and report their action from time to time to the church. A committee consisting of three sisters and two brethren of the church shall also be annually chosen to visit all in the church, and, as far as practicable, in the society also, in times of sickness or affliction, or when kept from the sanctuary by the infirmities of age. It shall be the duty of *every* church-member to report any such cases as may come to his or her knowledge, either at the next church meeting or directly to the committee; and also personally to visit such sick, afflicted, or aged persons, as far as practicable. Vacancies occurring in either committee may be filled at any meeting of the church.

Art. 5. The pastor, or, in his absence, any brother whom the church may at the time appoint, shall preside at all church meetings.

Art. 6. The rite of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at such times as the church shall from time to time determine; and in this rite *all* persons recognizing Jesus Christ as divinely commissioned of God for the instruction and salvation of men, and desiring to commemorate his dying love, shall be invited to participate.

Art. 7. A church meeting shall be regularly held on some evening of the week previous to communion, and at any time when notice is given from the pulpit.

Art. 8. It shall be the duty of the members of the church to attend all the meetings of the church, and to labor faithfully to advance its objects as specified in the second article.

Art. 9. This form of church organization may be amended at any regular church meeting, by a vote of two thirds of those present, provided due notice of the amendment proposed has been submitted at the previous meeting.

COVENANT

*Used in the Time of Increase Mather, in the Old North Church,
and adopted in the New North Church, December 11, 1827.*

“ You do, in this solemn presence, give up yourself, even your whole self, to the true God in Jesus Christ, promising to walk with God and with this church of His, in all His holy ordinances, and to yield obedience to every truth of His which has been or shall be made known to you as *your* duty, the Lord assisting you by His Spirit and grace.

“ We, then, the Church of Christ in this place, do receive you into the fellowship, and promise to walk towards you and to watch over you as a member of this church, endeavoring your spiritual edification in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

NOTE I.— Page 13.

On the day when this Discourse was delivered, Deacon John Barrett Hammatt and Deacon Robert Lash were present. The former was among the last persons baptized by Rev. Dr. Andrew Eliot. He was baptized in 1778. The latter was baptized by Rev. Dr. John Eliot, November 7th, 1779. It is an interesting fact, as exemplifying the strict observance of ordinances in those times, and the preference for baptisms in the church, that the day on which Deacon Lash was christened in the church was also *the day of his birth*. There was probably a desire on the part of his parents, that their child should be among the first baptized by their new pastor. It is worthy of notice, that both these deacons are descendants from the original founders of the New North Church.

NOTE J.— Page 13.

As early as April, 1818, seats in the New North Church were assigned “to the children who attend Sunday schools at the North End.” This was done on application of Messrs. Josiah Salisbury and William Thurston. These children were exclusively from the ranks of the poor. The Sunday schools which they attended were in the public school-rooms. In 1820, seats were also assigned in the gallery to the boys of the “Boys’ Asylum,” until in process

of time the Asylum was merged into the Farm School on Thompson's Island. Not until the latter portion of the year 1828 was there any vestry in our church. During that year a vestry was completed in the tower, at a cost of one hundred and eighty-eight dollars. In May, 1829, the use of this vestry was granted for the establishment of a Sabbath school, on application of Messrs. F. T. Gray and S. I. Beals.

NOTE K.—Page 14.

It may be useful to insert here the Constitution of this Association, as it is hoped its membership may be widely extended.

“PREAMBLE.

“Believing it desirable to form an Association of Teachers and others interested in Sunday-school instruction, we, whose names are annexed, do hereby organize ourselves under the following

“CONSTITUTION.

“*Art. 1. Name.*—The name of this society shall be The New North Sunday-School Association.

“*Art. 2. Membership.*—All teachers in the New North Sunday School, together with all worshippers in the church connected with this Society, may become members of this society by paying annually the sum of twenty-five cents into its treasury. Members of ‘The Sunday-School Society’ who are also worshippers in the New North Church shall be considered as members of the Association, without the payment of any fee.

“*Art. 3. Officers.*—The officers of this Association shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and two Librarians, all of whom shall be chosen annually in October, at which time also the Sunday School shall be thoroughly organized for the year.

“*Art. 4. Duties.*—It shall be the duty of the President to preside at the meetings of the Association, and he shall also be Superintendent of the Sabbath School. The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in his absence, and shall also be the Assistant Superintendent of the School. The Treasurer shall

receive all moneys which shall be collected, either in the society or Sunday School, shall keep a careful account of the same, and shall give a quarterly written return thereof to the Association. The Secretary shall keep a record of the meetings of the Association, and also of each class and teacher in the Sunday School, which shall be read once a quarter in the School. The Librarians shall jointly have charge of the Parish and Sunday-School Libraries. It shall be the duty of each Teacher to call at the home of each scholar in his or her class at least once in each quarter.

“ *Art. 5th. Meetings.* — The annual meeting for the choice of officers and other business shall be held in October, and quarterly meetings shall be held in January, April, and July. Other meetings of the Association shall be held whenever notified from the pulpit. At these meetings it shall be the duty of every member to be present. At any meeting, the President or Vice-President may propose persons as teachers in the Sunday School, and when elected they may hold the office during the year, provided they be reasonably attentive to their classes.

“ *Art. 6. Discussions.* — Some subject connected with the interests of the School shall be agreed upon at each quarterly meeting for consideration at the succeeding quarterly meeting.

“ *Art. 7. Vacancies.* — Vacancies in the list of officers or teachers may be filled at any meeting of the Association.

“ *Art. 8. Amendments.* — This constitution may be amended by a vote of two thirds of the members present at any meeting, provided due notice of the amendment proposed shall have been given at the previous meeting.”

NOTE L.—Page 15.

The constitution of the “Eliot Benevolent Association” is here given, with the expression of a wish that all worshippers with us should become members, as one of the best means of acquaintance and friendship in the society, and also of active usefulness.

“ PREAMBLE.

“ Believing that social intercourse and benevolent effort are essential to the vitality, usefulness, and permanence of any relig-

ious society, and that these objects can better be secured by organization than by purely individual exertion, we, being chiefly connected with the New North Religious Society, do form ourselves into an association, and adopt the following constitution.

“CONSTITUTION.”

“*Art. 1. Name.*—The name of this society shall be the Eliot Benevolent Association.

“*Art. 2. Objects.*—Our objects shall be the relief of the destitute, the support of religious institutions, and mutual acquaintance and friendship among ourselves.

“*Art. 3. Officers.*—The officers of this Association shall consist of four Directresses, six Assistant Directresses, a Secretary, and Treasurer, all of whom shall be chosen at the annual meeting hereinafter provided.

“*Art. 4. Duties.*—It shall be the duty of the four Directresses to preside at the meetings of the Association in rotation, and also, with the Assistant Directresses, to arrange work, devise plans, and in general to act for the welfare of the society. Upon the Assistant Directresses shall also devolve the duty of visiting any families connected with the New North Religious Society not members of the Association, and inviting them to become members. The Secretary and Treasurer shall present at each meeting a report of the proceedings and receipts at the previous meeting.

“*Art. 5. Order.*—While one of our objects is social intercourse, yet, as nothing can be accomplished without order, it shall be the duty of both officers and members to preserve quiet and attention during the transaction of business, which shall uniformly be conducted in an orderly and regular manner.

“*Art. 6. Membership.*—This association shall consist of both gentlemen and ladies, who shall become members by the payment each of the sum of fifty cents annually.

“*Art. 7. Meetings.*—The annual meeting of this Association shall take place early in the month of October, and other meetings at such times as the Association shall by vote determine, or a majority of the Directresses deem proper, and may at any time be appointed from the pulpit.

“*Art. 8. Amendments.*—This constitution may be amended by

a vote of two thirds of the members present at any meeting, provided notice of the intended amendments have been given at the previous meeting."

NOTE M.—Page 16.

The committee appointed by the Standing Committee to collect funds to furnish the church were Messrs. William A. Krueger, S. B. Krogman, Henry L. Dalton. They have attended to this duty with much fidelity and with a good degree of success, though it is to be regretted that a sufficient sum has not yet been collected to complete the furnishing of the pews throughout the house.

NOTE N.—Page 16.

The societies which tendered to the New North Religious Society an invitation to worship with them while its church was remodelling are the Unitarian Society in East Boston, the "Twelfth Congregational Society," the "Bulfinch Street Church," and the "First Universalist Society." All these invitations were cordially accepted, and many of our number availed themselves of this kindness from Sabbath to Sabbath. To the First Universalist Society we are under particular obligation, as the use of its house was tendered for our worship whenever not in use by that society, an invitation of which we availed ourselves by holding in their church a Sunday-evening service during the month of July.

NOTE O.—Page 17.

The New North Society has never been so fortunate as to be the recipient of any donation or benefaction to any very large amount. Its members have relied on their own exertions to meet the necessary extra expenses, which on some occasions have been large. Contributions for this purpose were always cheerfully and liberally made, until, owing to reduced numbers, the burden became exceedingly onerous. The society then felt themselves driven to the disagreeable necessity of borrowing, a fact which is much to be regretted. This course was continued for more than ten years, till 1818, when the debt thus incurred, from a few hundred dollars, had increased to the sum of six thousand five hundred dollars. Since that time, however, by earnest and generous exertions, the

society has been able to meet all its expenses without having recourse to loans, although these expenses (as is true of the expense of almost everything else in late years) have been greatly increased. The debt therefore remains the same as seven years ago. A strenuous effort to keep this debt within its present bounds, and as soon as possible to cancel it in whole or in part, cannot be too warmly recommended.

Perhaps there is no better place than this to give a list of such prominent benefactions as have been received by the society and placed on record. The *names* of those yet living, who, by their generosity to the society, have won a place in memory and esteem, are not given, it being believed they would shrink from any public notice of their gifts during this mortal life. The acts of none such, however, are unrecorded or forgotten.

In 1719 a bell was presented by John Frizell, a merchant of Boston. Its weight was about three hundred pounds. It was continued in use till the old house was taken down, in 1802; it was then sold to the town of Charlton, in Worcester County, and another bell procured. The present bell was procured in 1853, being placed in the belfry by the city, in lieu of one which had been destroyed by the Fire Alarm in the service of the city. Its weight is about two thousand pounds.

In 1742 a legacy was given by Elder Caleb Lyman, one of the original founders of the church in 1714, one of its first Deacons, and one of its first ruling Elders. He died Nov. 17, 1742, aged 65 years. The following extract from his will states the terms of his bequest: — “I give to the minister and other officers of the Church of Christ at the North End of Boston, to which I belong, and to their successors for ever, the sum of five hundred pounds, in trust, for the uses hereafter mentioned; that is to say, the interest thereof to be paid yearly and every year for ever to and for the use, benefit, and behalf of such person or persons as shall be the widow or widows of the present or succeeding minister or ministers of the said church, during the time that she or they shall happen to continue the widow or widows of such minister or ministers. But when and as often as there shall be none of the ministers’ widows living, I give the interest of the said sum of five hundred pounds to the minister or ministers of the said church during such time or times as there shall be no such widow or widows surviving. And my will and order is, that the ministers and other officers of

the said church let out the said sum of five hundred pounds at interest, on good security, for the use or uses aforesaid, and to and for no other uses, intents, or purposes whatsoever."

July, 1750, a large folio Bible was presented by Mr. Nathaniel Holmes.

In 1804, the pulpit and decorations were presented by the ladies of the society. Cost \$ 501.67.

In the same year the clock still in use was presented by Captain Nathaniel Goodwin. Its cost was one hundred and ten dollars.

In 1822, a legacy was left by Captain Seth Webber, in the following terms: "To the Treasurer for the time being of the New North Society, five hundred dollars, to be distributed at the discretion of the worthy pastor, Mr. Parkman, amongst the poor of that society."

In 1854, a Communion-table was given by the ladies of the society. By the ladies also of the Eliot Benevolent Association in connection with the New North Sunday School Association, the Vestry has been extensively repaired and improved during the past season. Generous subscriptions have also been made by the gentlemen worshipping in the New North Church towards furnishing the church, and for other commendable purposes.

As nearly every piece of the Communion Service was a gift, it seems proper to insert an account of it among the donations.

"AN ACCOUNT OF THE COMMUNION PLATE BELONGING TO
THE NEW NORTH CHURCH.

TAKEN NOVEMBER 6, 1775, BY DR. A. ELIOT.

*With the several Inscriptions on the Vessels.**

" 1. A Tankard.—'New North Church, Oct. 20, 1714.'

" 2. A Cup with two handles.—'Ex Dono C. Lyman, to y^e New North Church, Oct. 20, 1714.'

" 3. A Tankard.—'Given by John Baker, to the New North Church, 1714.'

" 4. A Tankard.—'New North Church, Oct. 20, 1714.'

" 5. A Tankard.—'This belongs to the New North Church.'

" 6. A Cup with two handles.—'This belongs to the New North Church.'

* These are of pure silver, and are all in use at the present time, 1854.

" 7. A Cup.—' Ex Dono — Elias Parkman, to y^e New North Church.'

" 8. A Cup.—' Ex Dono — N. Loring, to New North Church, 1716.'

" 9. A Cup.—' New North Church Cup, 1717.'

" 10. A Tankard.—' The Gift of John Frizell unto the New Church of Christ at the North End of Boston, 1718.'

" 11. A Cup.—' Given by Mr. Samuel Barrett to the New North Church, 1723.'

" 12. A Cup with two handles.—' The Gift of Mr. Joshua Cheever to the New North Church in Boston, 1727.'

" 13. A Cup with two handles.—' The Gift of Mr. Samuel Barrett to the New North Church of Christ, in Boston, May 4, 1728.'

" 14. A Tankard, with the Hutchinson Arms in front, no inscription or date. The record, in the handwriting of Dr. A. Eliot, states that 'This was given by the Hon. Thomas Hutchinson, Esq., in the early days of the Church.'

" 15. A Tankard.—' The Gift of Mr. John Harrod, to the New North Church of Christ, in Boston, 1729.'

" 16. A Tankard.—' The Gift of Mrs. Abiel Pen Ruddock, *widow*, to the New North Church in Boston.'

" 17. A Can. } There is no Inscription on these Cans; they were
" 18. A Can. } given by Deacon Grant and Deacon John Barrett.

" 19. A large Flagon.—Given by Mrs. Hunnewell.

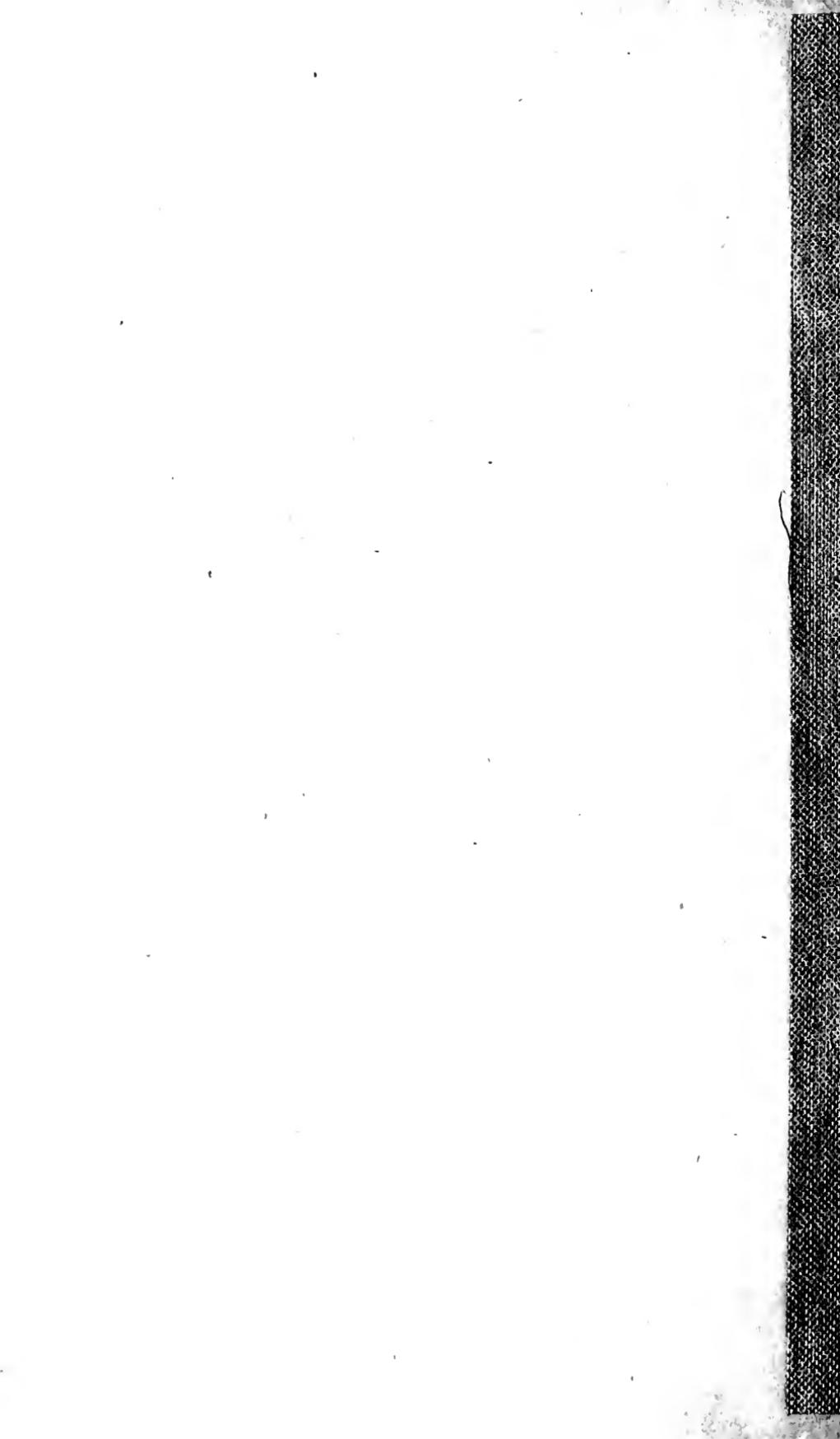
" 20. A large Flagon.—' Gift of Mrs. Rebecca Waters, to the New North Church in Boston, of which the Rev. Mr. Webb and Rev. Mr. Eliot are Pastors.'

" 21. A large Flagon.—' Given by Elder Cheever, July 23, 1750.'

" 22. A Basin, for baptizing.—' The Gift of Mr. David Farnum to the New North Church in Boston, N. E., 1722.'

" 23. A Strainer, and four large Platters."

* * In the preparation of this Discourse and the accompanying Notes, I have examined carefully the voluminous Records of the Church and Society; also a pamphlet entitled "Historical Notices of the New North Church," and many sermons relating to its history, by Rev. Drs. Eliot and Parkman. I have been also much aided in my researches by Mr. John F. Eliot.



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